GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:79
ANSWERED ON:22.02.2006
PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS - 2006
Rao Shri Devarakonda Vittal

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas-2006 was recently held at Hyderabad;

(b) If so, the details of discussions held therein;

(c) Whether the PM had advised each State to devise its own strategy to benefit from the expertise of overseas Indians;

(d) If so, the reaction of the States so far;

(e) Whether the Government has decided to grant voting rights to NRIs and has introduced a more liberal Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojana for workers;

(f) If so, the details in this regard;

(g) Whether an easy-to-use integrated electronic facility to remit money to India by NRIs has been launched recently;

(h) Whether the emigration process is also likely to be streamlined; and

(i) If so, the details and the time by which a final decision on all the above issues is likely to be taken?

Answer

MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (VAYALAR RAVI)

(a) to
(i): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No.79 to be answered on 22nd February 2006.

(a&b): The fourth Pravasi Bharitya Divas was organized from 7th - 9th January, 2006 at Hyderabad. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas - 2006 was inaugurated by the Hon`ble Prime Minister of India and culminated in the conferment of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards by Rashtrapatiji. In the 3 day conference there were 9 plenary sessions, 6 parallel sessions, 3 panel discussions and 2 round table discussions, covering a wide range of issues including Diaspora partnership in Health care, Remittance Services, Knowledge Network, Culture, Overseas employment, Diaspora Youth and Gender issues, Opportunities in Education, Assisted living, Diaspora Philanthropy, Diaspora and political discourse, Communal Harmony and Secularism etc. A separate interactive session was held on the second day with ten participating State governments followed by parallel sessions conducted by the State governments. Six states namely Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala and Maharashtra were represented by the Chief Ministers, while Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Rajasthan were represented by the Industry Ministers and West Bengal by the Chief Secretary.

(c&d): As a follow up to PM`s advice, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has since written to the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Bihar to establish a separate department/cell as done by Kerala to serve as a single point contact for Overseas Indians. All the above State governments had enthusiastically taken part in PBD `06 both in the Plenary as well as in the one-to-one sessions.

(e&f): A proposal for giving Voting rights to Non-Resident Indians has already been approved by the Cabinet. It is expected that a Bill in this regard will be introduced in the current session of the Parliament.A more liberal Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana-2006 for the benefit of the Overseas Indian Workers was launched by the Government at PBD, Hyderabad and came into force from 1st February, 2006. Under the upgraded Scheme, the emigrant workers will now get a minimum insurance cover of Rs.5 lakhs and the policy will be for the entire period of employment contract. An additional cover of Rs.25,000/- for the legal expenses incurred by the emigrants in connection with their employment has also been included minimum insurance cover of Rs 5 lakhs and the policy will for the entire period of employment contract. Several leading insurance companies of India have shown interest in the Scheme. This will bring down the insurance premium substantially.

(g): An easy to use Integrated Electronic Remittance facility was launched during the Pravasi Bharaitya Divas - 2006 during the Session on `Remittance Services` with Finance Minister Shri P. Chidambaram. This new facility offered by the UTI Bank in

association with Doha Bank initially combines the virtues of speed, economy and convenience and is expected to be fully operational from the next financial year.

(h&i): A proposal entitled `e-governance solution for emigration` received from the Semiconductor Complex Ltd.(SCL), Punjab - a Government of India enterprise - is under consideration of the Government. The said proposal envisages establishing a complete IT infrastructure at the Office of Protector General of Emigrants and eight field offices of the Protector of Emigrants and providing a tamper proof `Smart Card` based ID photo cards to emigrants which shall have adequate data storage capacity to carry emigrants` personal information, visa particulars, recruiting agent`s details, POE office approval reference, insurance details, etc..